

Stark's Backstory

"Seems like this weather isn't going to be clearing up anytime soon" said a grey haired elderly man to no one in particular. The sky lit up again with lightening and thunder boomed in the distance as a storm ravaged the small island inhabited by only a small settlement of simple farmers and traders.

"Well, I suppose it's now or never" he continued to say to only himself. He picked up his pack and threw it on his back before making sure everything else on his person was secure. With one final check over he set out onto the dirt road, away from the protection of the shrines awning. The rain battered his form, trying in vain to get past the rain parka the man had worn over his sturdy form. Years of living on an Island in the North Blue had taught the old man the power of being prepared for any weather, whether it was rain or sun, snow or lightning.

He continued along the path that he knew like an old friend, the years he had walked along this route to and fro between his home and the town playing through his mind. The road curved through forest and farm fields before settling along the shores of the ocean, only tens of yards from the oceans that thousands sailed and lived on. And while the old man walked on, lost in memories of times past he never expected the change that would come into his life on this stormy afternoon.

Lightning flashed once again in the sky, as if commanded by a man high in the clouds. The whole beach flashed with light from the sky above.

"Oh my that was a big one!" The old man shouted as a grin spread across his face. However the grin quickly turned to a frown as the old man strained his eyes to see what had come across his vision when the lightning had struck. Waiting again for the beach to be illuminated the old man stood rigid, his gaze focused and stern.

"Could it..." He trailed off while he waited. Again lightning arched its way through the clouds, striking the ocean in anger.

"It was!" He exclaimed with shock as he ran down from his memory lane to the beach. Throwing his pack down along the way he pushed his old body to keep up with his will. As he approached the figure he saw his fevered pace grew even stronger. Again the lightning flashed, lighting up the figure. Before him sat the wreckage of a ship's keel and hull torn to shreds by the strength of the ocean. The beach was littered with casualties of the shipwreck, from destroyed crates and scrap wood to sails and top masts. However the old man had yet to see a single person, his mind racing with possibilities.

'Perhaps no one was on board? Maybe they all got off safely?' he thought to himself as he searched the wreckage, ripping through boards to reach the deeper parts of the ship. He continued on through the internals of the ship examining the damage that had been done. At

first glance one would assume the storm had done the job, however upon closer inspection the truth began to show itself. Holes from cannon fire could be seen throughout the hull, with large holes littering the walls of the ship, their shattered splintered appearance filling in the picture for the old man. His journey eventually came to an end as he reached the cabins quarters inside the destroyed ship, the door ajar from the violent end that had befallen the ship. Pushing the door open with caution, the old man continued on inside to his final stop. The room itself had actually held up rather well considering the rest of the ship. While in disarray, with items scattered throughout, the room was kept together, almost untouched from the attack that had come upon the poor sailors of the ship. As the old man searched the room his eyes came across a chest in the corner, hidden and tucked away from just a first glance. Its large wooden form covered haphazardly with blankets and other clothes.

“Now what are you doing so hidden away?” The weathered old man thought out loud. He continued over to the chest, examining the locks on the worn chest.

“Hidden away yet no locks on it? Well isn’t that curious?” he mused. He reached towards the chest, pausing for a moment of hesitation, his eyes squinting in caution. The moment soon passed however as he deemed the chest to not be a threat, moving his hands over the sides of the large chest he lifted it open with little effort. But inside was not gold or treasure, nor maps and personal belongings. Instead, wrapped in blankets and sound asleep was a small child, no older than 2 or 3. His form surrounded by only a photo and a note, and another item of particular interest. A sword sheath, completely red, with a crescent crest located down the length of its form. And a black and white wrapped handle coming out of the top of it.

“Hurry up! Come on already Grandpa! We’re going to miss it if we don’t go faster!” yelled out a child as he pulled the sleeve of the man behind him. Years had gone by since the fatal night of the shipwreck that had left the small child all alone in the world. Nothing had ever come of that night either, no one had come seeking information and no other survivors were found. The small boy had now grown into the wild and energetic body of a 10 year old. His hair wild and unruly and the red shirt and blue pants showing how much he enjoyed the outdoors.

“Oh I’m coming as fast as I can! These old bones just don’t seem to want to move like they used to” the old man replied. “Matter of fact” he continued with a twinkle in his eyes “I don’t seem to be able to move at all!”

“Grandpa! Nooo!” the boy whined out with a pout across his face. He continued to pull his grandfather’s sleeve in a vain attempt to drag along the much larger man, who persisted in standing bone still, mimicking a body that wouldn’t move.

“Gwhahaha! I’m only playing Stark!” he replied while letting out a deep laugh. “Come on, hope on my shoulders and I’ll make sure we get there in time.”

“Yes!” Stark yelled jumping up in the air, he ran to his grandpa's now kneeling form and hopped

on his back. "Alright Grandpa let's go!" he yelled pointing his arm forward towards the town. With only a smile and a nod the old man pushed off, dust left in his wake.

As they grew closer and closer to the town warning bells began to go off inside the running man's mind. The smoke coming from the town was far too dark and large, smoke of that nature could only come from something large burning...like a building.

"Stark, I want you to stay here, stay here and wait until I come back alright?" His grandpa said as he let him down off his back.

"Whats..whats going on Grandpa?" Stark asked with a concerned frown and scrunched up eyes in confusion.

"Nothing I'm sure but for now I want you to stay here alright?" he replied with a smile, reassuring the boy.

"Alright..." Stark said as he looked down, resignation lacing his voice.

The old man put his hand on Stark's head, ruffling his hair before setting off for the town. Stark watched his grandfather's back grow smaller in the distance, a sinking feeling happening in his stomach as if his body knew something he didn't. Time passed as Stark sat there alone under the shrine that his grandfather had taken shelter under so many times in years past. He kicked a stone back and forth with little interest, his mind in deep focus as he pondered a decision inside.

"That's it! I'm going!" Stark yelled out, his eyes taking on determination and his will resolved. The 10 year old rushed off to the city as fast as his legs would take him. As he got closer however, that speed tapered off, the sight before him taking him by shock causing him to stumble. The town that he had known for his entire life laid before him, burning and crumbling. Everything before him was either charred or still burning, shop windows destroyed and the streets littered with debris and destruction. The cobble stone scorched and battered by some unknown force. Stark ran into the town with an even stronger push, his mind racing with what could have happened, and even worse, what could have happened to his grandfather. As he ran through the town his ears picked up on the distant sound of yelling, but beyond that the sounds of explosions and destruction, someone was still alive in this town and he intended to find out. Running towards the sound's location he realized that he was getting closer and closer to the town square, located near the water and the port and the location of many of the town's festivals and celebrations. He finally reached the town center, destruction laid out before him and only a hellish visage remaining of the once beautiful area.

"Can you keep this up you old bastard!?" Yelled a man to Stark's right, he spun to the direction the voice came from, horror etching across his face at the sight before him.

"You're far too young to push me you upstart!" Yelled the old man back. Just yards away from

Stark was his grandfather and a crazy grinned man engaged in combat. His grandfather was covered in various cuts and bruises, blood caking his shirt and arms. The other man still seemed in fit condition however, his large black coat singed but no worse for wear. The two men continued their fight, clashing together with all their strength. Stark's grandfather throwing a left and then right hook before countering an attack with a booming high kick.

'This is unreal' thought Stark to himself as he witnessed the combat that was taking place before him. 'This is my grandfather?' as Stark sat there watching the battle his eyes caught movement from across the square. A man with a rifle had propped himself up on some destroyed debris from a collapsed building with his sights trained on his grandfather, ready to take a cheap shot before his commander could lose. Stark's eyes widened with fear as he realized what was about to happen.

"GRANDPA!" Stark yelled out with fear, his words carrying the shock and desperation he felt inside seeing the situation. "GRANDPA WATCH OUT!" Stark yelled again, hoping his grandfather heard him and moved. His grandfather's focus on the fight shifted along with his enemies as they looked towards the location of the young voice.

"Stark?" His grandfather called out.

"Got you" said the gunman to himself as his finger pressed down on the trigger.

"Stark get out of here! Leave..." his grandfather's words cut short by the crack that rang out through the square. His grandpa's eyes widened as he was struck, the impact shuttering his old body. Shock bleed throughout his face as his mind realized what had happened, he looked down at the red stain that was spreading through his shirt, the smell of iron reaching his nose. He could barely reach a hand up to the wound before he collapsed on the ground, the bullet's injury finally reaching his mind in full, and his body finally giving out.

"Grandpa" Stark whispered to himself as he watched the entire scene play out in front of him like a cruel joke. His grandfather's prone form on the ground only further cementing what happened just seconds before. "No...no no no no" Stark began to tell himself, his body moving without thinking as he ran towards his grandfather's dying body. "NO GRANDPA!" Stark yelled out again.

"Seems like we were too much for you huh you old bastard!?" Yelled out the man in the black jacket. His loud laughter echoing throughout between the buildings around him. "Maybe next time you'll think twice before refusing our demands!"

Stark reached his grandfather's body as the man continued laughing from afar, his accomplice coming over to him before informing him of the situation in the town.

"Captain, the crew is ready to disembark, it seems as though the rumors about the treasure being here were false, we've already searched through the mayor's building and through the treasure rooms, nothing was found." he stated, before slinging his gun over his back and walking off towards the harbor where their ship was moored.

"What a shame..." the captain trailed off before changing his focus towards the young boy and his dying grandfather. Listening in on the last words of the old geezer who had pushed him in combat.

"Grandpa, don't go! Grandpa!" cried Stark as he sat next to his grandfather's bleeding body. Tears cascaded down his face as his entire world crumbled around him. The only person he had in the world was before him, dying, and there was nothing he could do but watch.

"Gwhah -cough- haha" his grandpa laughed out at his grandsons tears, hoping to lighten his adopted grandson's pain. "Stark I want you to listen well, I don't -cough- have much time left in this world." he continued as blood trailed down his mouth from the internal injuries he had sustained from combat and the fatal gunshot.

Stark's eyes looked up in sadness and pain, focused on his grandpa's final words.

"Ever since I found you in that shipwrecked boat I knew you would grow up to be something special in this world. You have something inside of you my boy that makes you strong, maybe one day the strongest. -cough- do you know what is?" he asked out in labored breath. Stark shook his head at his grandfather's question. "That's willpower Stark, you have the will to survive, which is why I know you will live past this. No matter what happens Stark." his grandfather continued before coughing up more blood and groaning.

"Grandpa save your words I can find help for you! Just, Just stay with me!" Stark called out in panic at seeing his grandfather slip through his fingers.

"I'm afraid it's too late for me. This old body is almost done for...so listen to me carefully." his grandpa said looking at him with a bloody smile. "When you go home you'll go into my room, and look under the third floor panel. You'll find out what to do from there. And Stark."

"Ye...Yeah?" Stark asked through hiccups and tears.

"Never doubt what you can do. And thank you for bringing me so much happiness" His grandpa said with one final breath, his chest ceasing to rise and fall and his eyes closing, the smile displayed across his face never falling. Stark looked on at his grandfather with dead eyes, the realization that his grandfather was never coming back bringing back horror across his face. Tears rushing to his eyes and an anguished scream leaving his mouth. His yells reached throughout the city echoing down destroyed streets with no one around to hear them except the captain of the crew that had just burned down Stark's entire life.

"Boy" Called the captain "Boy look at me"

Stark arched his neck slowly, bringing his gaze to the large man across from him. "What do you want" his voice came out, slow and dead, the events of the day having robbed him of the joy and happiness he had earlier in the day. The young boy that had grown up in a small home on a farm on the edge of town, on his small island was now dead.

"I'm feeling generous today, even despite me not finding my target, so i'll leave you with two things." The captain said as he began to walk away

"What could you possibly leave me with?" asked Stark, his eyes red and cheeks tear stained.

"I'm leaving you with your life, and with a goal, revenge. Life's gotten boring for me, so chase me! Bring me to justice for the life I stole from you! If I see you again one day then I'll know that your old man's words actually mattered." He said as he turned around before continuing on towards the harbor again. "I look forward to the day we meet again. Stark!" He yelled out before disappearing down the hill towards the water.

Time seemed to halt for Stark as he stood up and began to stumble through the burned town. The fires had all calmed down to just embers by the time he left. Finding rope and a palette of wood stark went back to his grandfather's body, wrapping him up Stark tied the rope to the palette. He barely noticed the weight he pulled through the town and beyond, back towards the home he once shared with his grandfather. He eventually reached the old home that had cradled his childhood innocence. Which was now shattered and dead. Leaving his grandfather's body outside under the large oak tree that was next to the home Stark shuffled inside, following the last instructions of his grandfather.

"Alright....third panel" Stark said to himself as he reached his grandpa's room. He went inside, taking a moment to take in the room. The smell of dirt and wood filled the room, reminding him of the man who had raised him, who now was dead at the hand of pirates. Moving on he finally reached the floor panel that his grandpa had mentioned. With a heave he lifted the panel from the floor below him, revealing the contents that his grandpa had been so pressed to hide.

"....Grandpa...." Stark whispered out as he looked into the compartment below. Inside was numerous treasures, keepsakes that his grandpa had from years and years of living. However it was a few items that caught his eye. The small book that had the words "Log Book" across the top of it, a single rolled up letter, and the katana with a crescent pattern across it's red sheath. Stark took out all the items, intent to go through them all in the next day or so. The question of what he was going to do now without his grandfather or anyone else still went through his head. At only ten years old he couldn't do much, let alone make a living, and with the town burned to ground, the island had nothing left for him.

Pulling himself from his thoughts of his future Stark began to read the note that was left in the compartment. Unfurling it Stark began to read what was written down in his grandfather's handwriting.

Stark,

If you're reading this then that means I'm gone from this world. And while I hope that I've passed from normal peaceful means I doubt that's the case. Stark you know that i've raised you without any care that you were not my true grandson. And I thank you for never having an issue with that. But I also never told you how you came into my care. Stark you only have one name because I never knew your parents. I found you inside a treasure chest, safe and hidden away on a shipwreck that crashed onto the shore years ago. Inside was the sword you'll also find with this letter. The sword came from who knows where but it is of extremely legendary quality. I only know this for another reason I never told you about. Years ago I was also a sailor on the high seas. I was with a crew that has long been gone from history but we known throughout the four oceans, revered and feared. Once our captain disbanded the group I found myself settling down on this humble island, content to live out a peaceful life. Never did I think that you would wash up in the carcass of a destroyed ship on a stormy night, nor did I believe you would have such a big impact on my life. And for that I thank you. In this compartment I've locked away my memorable items from my life, including my log book from the years of sailing on the open seas. Take my log book, and when you're old enough, set sail onto the oceans and find your past Stark. Find your full name and find out where you came from. I could never give you that. But hopefully in death I can now give you the help you'll need in this rough world. While the sword is magnificent I also cannot teach you in the arts. So find my old crewmate when you disembark. His name is Edward Steward, or Ward for short. Mention my name and he'll know for sure why you have come. Take the small boat down by the southern side of the island, it'll serve you well enough to get to the island. You're a strong boy, you should be able to make it on your own to get to him for help. He's just two islands away to the west. So with that my young grandson. I give you one final farewell. And one final good luck.

With eternal love,

Your grandfather, William 'Iron Fist' Tatch

Stark put the letter down as tears trailed down his face. The emotions that had subsided had now returned full force. The realization that his grandfather was gone and the day was not just a terrible dream. Stark sat for some time just crying, letting the day that had just happened wash over him, letting out all the emotions he had carried inside of him. After some time had passed he finally left the home. His gaze stopped on the sheet covering his grandpa's corpse as it rested below the great oak tree close by.

"I suppose i'll have to bury him huh" He said to no one but himself. The digging and burial took hours and lasted into the night, by the time he had finished the grave and marked the tree with his grandfather's name night had fallen across the island. The young boy looked out beyond out to the ocean towards the west after cleaning himself up inside and gathering his things. The

moon hanging low and large above the water. His mind played over his grandfather's instructions to head west and begin training on using the blade he was stowed away with. While he still felt sad a new emotion was now taking over inside, it almost felt like...excitement. Excitement of going off on a new journey into life, and while he still was young. He knew that his grandpa believed in him. And that's all he needed. Looking down at the blade next to him a thought came to Stark's head

"Kaguya...Kaguya-Hime" Stark said to the blade, looking over the crescent covered sheath. "I'm going to call you Kaguya" he continued as his gaze drifted towards the large moon above him. "Yeah...Kaguya". The sword seemed to hum out in acceptance at the name given. Something Stark barely picked up on at the time, but one day would come to find out the secret regarding the sword he had now at his side.

The next morning Stark gathered his things; food, clothes, and the last of his possessions from the aging house. He said goodbye to his grandfather after locking the home up, promising him that he would be back one day, but only once he proved his grandpa that he had the will to succeed in the world. And the power to take down the man who had ended the life of his loved one.

"I'll get him grandpa. I'll avenge you and take out that cruel man so he can never harm anyone again." Stark said to the grave and tree before him. Standing up from the grave he set off towards the shore where his grandfather's small boat was moored. Throwing his stuff into the boat he climbed, untying the knots that kept the boat bound to land and set off to the west. He climbed to the bow of the small boat and yelled out as a large smile plastered across his face.

"Alright world! Here I come!"